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AUTHOR Pham, Nga; Dykstra, P.
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ABSTRACT

In response to research indicating that Asian Pacific American (APA) students were considerably more dissatisfied with programs and services than any other ethnic group, Rancho Santiago Community College (RSCC), in California, conducted a series of focus group interviews with APA students to determine their characteristics and motivations. All 4,534 APA students enrolled in credit courses at the college's Santa Ana and Orange campuses in spring 1996 were invited to participate, with 168 students joining the focus groups held throughout April 1996. Of the participants, 59% were male, 66% had attended high school outside of the United States, and 72% had lived in the country for less than 5 years. Reasons cited by participants for attending RSCC included recommendations from friends, convenient location, and affordability, while elements of the college that they liked included the relaxed and comfortable environment, the diversity of the student body, knowledgeable faculty, and the variety of course offerings. What participants disliked most about RSCC included unwelcoming attitudes on the part of some faculty, the failure of the ethnic make-up of faculty to reflect that of the student body, discriminatory behavior exhibited by some employees and students, and being stereotyped. Offices, departments, and programs the students found helpful included the admissions department, the counseling department, the financial aid office, and the English department. However, some participants cited the financial aid office and the counseling department as unreceptive or unhelpful. (HAA)

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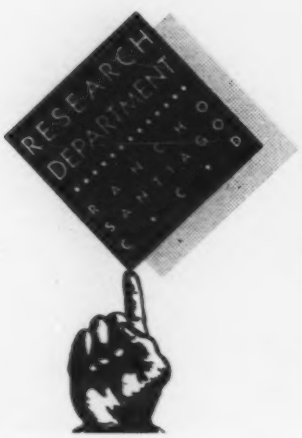
ED 400 893

A Positive Learning Environment is Everybody's Business:

Asian Pacific American Students Speak



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Readers' Summary

Duy is a 48 year-old father who has spent seven years in a reeducation camp and more than three years looking for ways to reunite with his family in the U.S. His children have lived most of their lives not knowing him as their father. After being sponsored by his wife and spending a year doing domestic jobs, he decided that improving his English was the only way of getting out. He came to RSC to learn English and a vocational trade, find employment and contribute to his family financially. He believes this is the only way that he can gain his children's respect, especially since they all are successful. He is grateful to RSC for providing him with the opportunity to learn and hopes to accomplish his goals as soon as possible.

Fu is a 22 year-old Chinese-American woman majoring in theater arts. Many assume that she is Vietnamese, born in another country, or should be majoring in sciences instead of arts. People think that because she has black hair and a dark complexion, that she experiences what everyone else with black hair and a dark complexion experiences. How wrong of them! She does not know anymore about other Asian cultures and traditions than the Euro-Americans next to her. She is a fifth generation Chinese-American. She wishes that RSC would consider classes that promote cultural sensitivity and expose students to the diverse population that surrounds them each day.

Nartapong tells his own story: "I was recruited to come to RSC by the International Student Program. I like RSC, including the staff, faculty, and the various support programs that it has for students. Such programs are not found in the colleges and universities in Thailand. My only problem at RSC is that many students think that I am taking their financial aid from them! They do not know that I have to pay my own way, much more tuition than what others have to pay, that I do not qualify for any financial assistance from the U. S. government, and that I plan to go back to my country to run my father's business. I have no interest in taking anything away from anyone! I like RSC and its diversity, comfortable environment, and good instructors. I only wish people would take the time to know who I am before they make accusations that are false."

These are three very different stories representing the diversity of RSC's Asian Pacific American students' characteristics, backgrounds and experiences. Understanding and embracing the diversity of RSC's student body is an important element in all facets of the college.

This report presents Asian Pacific American students' evaluations of their educational experience at RSC. Students were asked to provide opinions regarding what they liked and disliked about RSC, as well as suggestions about how RSC could alleviate some of concerns raised by our Asian Pacific American student body. This report will provide RSC decision makers with an idea of our Asian Pacific American students' current feelings about their educational experience and areas that need to improve.

Major Findings

A. *Why Asian Pacific American students came to RSC.*

- A convenient location which allows for greater access.
- RSC's excellent reputation in Orange County based on recommendations from family and friends.
- A lower cost education than one provided through a university.

B. *What Asian Pacific American students liked about RSC.*

- An environment that enhanced academic success through relaxed and comfortable surroundings.
- The diversity present in the cultural backgrounds of the student body.
- Knowledgeable and committed faculty and staff who are friendly and understanding.
- The wide selection of classes offered each semester.

C. *What Asian Pacific American students disliked about RSC.*

- The unwelcoming attitudes of some instructors and the ways some teach.
- The ethnic make-up of staff and faculty does not reflect that of the student body.
- Discriminatory behavior exhibited by some employees and other students.
- Some staff in the student services area were not very courteous to students of color.
- The problem of being stereotyped.

D. *What office, department and/or program Asian Pacific American students found most helpful.*

- Students could not attend school without the assistance provided by the Financial Aid Office.

- The telephone registration and in-person registration processes are easy and convenient.
- The Counseling Department and office staff provided a great deal of assistance with career planning.

E. *What office, department and/or program Asian Pacific American students found <u>not</u> to be helpful.*

- The unreceptive behavior shown by some staff in the Financial Aid Office.
- The Counseling Department was not helpful because the answers given resulted in students taking more classes than required.

Recommendations

1. RSC should hire a representative staff and faculty to closely match the ethnic make-up of the entire student body, especially Asian Pacific Americans.

2. RSC needs more programs and events to promote cultural understanding and sensitivity among staff, faculty and students.

3. New student orientation needs to be presented in other languages.

4. Based on the large diverse student body, RSC needs to have an Asian resource center where students can go to gain necessary information and services in their native language.

5. Faculty and staff should not stereotype Asian Pacific American students.

6. More courses with an Asian focus, as well as Asian language courses, should be developed and included in the college curriculum.

7. Students would like an ESL program that includes more instruction and practice in conversational skills, pronunciation, vocabulary, and accent reduction.

Table of Contents

Page

Introduction 1

Why did Asian Pacific American students decide to come to RSC 4

What Asian Pacific American students liked most about RSC 6

What Asian Pacific American students disliked most about RSC 8

What office, department and/or program have Asian Pacific American students found helpful 12

What office, department and/or program have Asian Pacific American students found not to be helpful 14

Recommendations 16

Students' Comments:

Why did Asian Pacific American students decide to come to RSC 20

What Asian Pacific American students liked most about RSC 21

What Asian Pacific American students disliked most about RSC 23

What office, department and/or program have Asian Pacific American students found helpful 26

What office, department and/or program have Asian Pacific American students found not to be helpful 27

Things Asian Pacfic American students would like to see at RSC 28

Introduction:

Over the last five years the Research Department has found in various student surveys that Asian Pacific American students are considerably more dissatisfied than any other ethnic group with programs and services provided by RSC. As a result of these findings, the Research Department began conducting an on-going dialogue, a series of focus group interviews, to better understand the issues and challenges Asian Pacific American students face here on our campuses and what we as a college can do to enhance the learning experience of our students at RSC.

All Asian Pacific American students enrolled in a credit course at the Santa Ana and Orange campuses during Spring 1996 were personally invited by the Chancellor to participate in this project. Letters were also sent to selected faculty and staff asking them to encourage their Asian Pacific American students to take part. Students who indicated that they were willing to become involved were also encouraged to ask their fellow Asian Pacific American students to take part in this endeavor. Of the 4,534 Asian Pacific American students enrolled, 168 students participated in the focus group interviews. The focus groups were conducted throughout the month of April at the Santa Ana Campus by members of the Research Department.

Of the 168 Asian Pacific American students who participated in the focus groups,

- 59% were male and 41% female;
- 23% were under 21 years of age, 26% were between the ages of 22 and 30, another 35% were between the age of 31 and 50, and 17% over the age of 50;
- 66% of the students attended high school outside of the United States;
- 72% have lived in the United States for less than five years and 25% have been here for more than 10 years; and
- over 65% of the students have attended RSC for two years or less, 30% have been here for five to ten semesters and only 4% have taken classes at RSC for more than 10 semesters.

When asked what kind of goals students would like to achieve at RSC,

- 52% wanted to transfer, with or without an AA/AS degree, in order to earn a bachelor's degree;
- 21% definitely wanted to graduate from RSC with an AA/AS degree;
- 17% are undecided at this time;
- 4% want to improve their English skills so that they can gain employment; and
- 6% of the other students have various other goals.

Participants also shared their major while at RSC,

- 25% of the students are undecided about their major at this time;
- 11% are studying nursing;
- 7% are majoring in each of the engineering and biological science field
- 6% in each of the computer science and business administration field;
- 4% in English; and
- 33% are majoring in various other fields.

Participants were placed in each focus group based on common characteristics such as Asian background, age, length of stay in the United States and International Program student status. Many experts provided insight into the study design so that no bias would be introduced. Participants were guaranteed anonymity, and the names of participants will not be released.

Students were asked general questions regarding what they liked and disliked about RSC, as well as specific questions about which offices, programs or departments were most helpful and not helpful. Students were also asked to provide suggestions for improvements and to identify important issues that needed to be addressed. These questions were discussed during a "brainstorming" session where students shared their responses with the group, and their comments were written on flip charts for everyone to see. These discussions serve as the primary source of information for this report. To allow for maximum participation by those uncomfortable in sharing their opinions with the group, index cards

were provided to all students, allowing them to write down their views. The cards were collected and the opinions shared are included in the appendices.

The Research Department would like to thank those students who took time out of their schedule to voice their opinions and concerns in these small group dialogues. The information provided will give program staff and managers the opportunities to evaluate the effectiveness of the programs and services that they are providing. Rancho Santiago College has always prided itself on being responsive to students' needs and the expectation is that this will continue.

Why did Asian Pacific American students decide to come to RSC?

"RSC was recommended to me by my friend; he gave me good advice."

"I came to RSC because it is close to my work and home. It also offers classes that I like."

"RSC has a good reputation for their quality of instructors and classes."

"The cost of tuition is less expensive than the universities."

Students cited several reasons why they specifically chose to attend RSC: 1) RSC was in a convenient location, 2) RSC was recommended by a friend or family member, 3) RSC had an excellent reputation in Orange County, and 4) tuition was affordable. Students also expressed that the availability of classes and class offerings played a role in deciding to attend RSC.

Students felt the convenient location allowed them greater access than if they were to attend another college farther away. Many expressed that, with their hectic schedules of caring for family, working, and going to school, they do not need the additional stress of traveling long distances from one place to another. This proximity criterion relates to the economic concerns raised by the students; they reported the campus could be reached by walking, taking the bus, or by having family or friends drop them off, since many of the students' access to a car was limited. This is also important because it allowed students greater access to services and activities other than attending classes, such as the library, labs and tutoring assistance. This advantage surfaced repeatedly in all focus groups.

Many decided to attend RSC because of RSC's reputation and recommendations of friends and family. Students claimed that no one will be more truthful to you than your

family and friends, and, therefore, they took their words at face value. They also expressed that they were glad that they took their advice to attend RSC.

Another major reason students decided to attend RSC was the affordable cost of tuition. Some said even though they qualified for a university, they opted to attend RSC because they can become just as prepared for upper-level division coursework at a much lower cost. Others stated that they only wanted to learn English and felt RSC offered the best program for the best value, especially since they had only been in the United States a short period of time.

Other qualities identified by the students included the many types of courses offered and their availability throughout the day and evenings. Students also commented that due to RSC's lack of competitive admissions requirements, students who were just learning English and adapting to life in the United States had an easier time in this nurturing environment.

What Asian Pacific American students liked most about RSC.

"RSC is very accessible, progressive in its thinking and has helpful staff and a mixed student body."

"I like the variety of classes that RSC offers, unlike other colleges."

"I like the fact that most students have a different cultural background and that RSC is providing all students with equal opportunity."

"Faculty are very knowledgeable and committed to student learning."

Throughout the focus group sessions, students cited a number of factors that they liked about RSC, with four general areas mentioned most often. These were the 1) comfortable atmosphere at RSC, 2) the diversity in cultural backgrounds of the student body, 3) excellent instructors, and 4) wide selection of classes.

Students were very complimentary towards RSC for providing an environment that enhances academic success through relaxed and comfortable surroundings. They generally reported that RSC is very accommodating of the needs of all students. They all praised the various programs and services that are provided to support the students. The students are proud to be affiliated with RSC's excellent reputation.

Students also liked the diversity in cultural backgrounds of the student body. They valued the opportunity to make friends with students of foreign nationalities, and appreciated the fact that there were many Asian students who were willing to share their traditions and cultures. They also expressed high regard for the different events that RSC has celebrated which have promoted diversity. It was their belief that RSC should continue to support this approach of celebrating the different cultures of our student population.

According to the students, people who work for a college are important because they help guide students throughout their educational experience. Students expressed that not only were the instructors knowledgeable and committed, which accounts for the fact that students enjoyed the curriculum, but faculty and staff were also friendly and understanding.

Students talked about how much they like the wide selection of classes that RSC offers. They enjoyed classes in the fields of speech communication, ESL, English, vocational education and technology. Students pointed out that RSC also provides excellent computer labs that allow those who cannot afford a computer at home to work with technology at school. They cherish this resource.

What Asian Pacific American students disliked most about RSC.

"I do not like RSC when administrators show their discrimination among students."

"People judge our intelligence based on our accent - that we're stupid if we can't pronounce things correctly."

"There are more older, mature students attending RSC at night, yet there are no services that match our needs, like child care."

"The ethnic make-up of the faculty and staff does not reflect that of the student body. Whey are there so few Asian faculty and staff?"

"Bookstore prices are too high and the refund policy is horrible."

While students were very complimentary when asked what they liked about RSC, they were reluctant in responding to what they disliked about RSC. Many expressed the opinion that what they said could be used by staff and faculty to target Asian Pacific American students. After reassurances that what they said will only be used to assist staff to better serve the entire student body, students began to express their views on what they disliked, and it was usually done on the note cards. **Three aspects that were disliked most by participating students included 1) some faculty and staff, 2) incidents and examples of discrimination, 3) the ESL program, and 4) individual problems with individual programs and services.**

While students primarily complimented instructors, they also expressed concern regarding untoward attitudes of some instructors and the way some teach. Though they do not doubt faculty's knowledge and skills, a few questioned some faculty's ability to communicate with students. Others stated that many instructors are not helpful, especially

on a one-to-one basis. Students said that some faculty are not available in their offices during their scheduled office hours.

Students expressed that some staff in the student services area are not very courteous to students of color. A few students pointed out that the student services area is probably not any worse in this regard than others, but that participants had more interaction with staff in these programs and services.

Furthermore, some students expressed concern that the ethnic make-up of staff and faculty at RSC does not reflect that of the student body. Some students felt that people with a similar cultural understanding were not available for advice or just to talk.

Students expressed that some ESL faculty need to speak at a slower pace so that students can follow and understand the message clearly. Faculty members they said, should also have a better understanding of the variety of students' learning styles and teach accordingly. The students interviewed believed that there should be reading courses designed specifically for ESL students and that the reading courses have too much redundancy, which hinders students' motivation to learn. Students wants courses to include more focus on speaking and engaging in a dialogue with the instructor or their fellow students in order to practice pronunciation skills and accent reduction. The students felt that more conversational (one-to-one) types of lab sessions, rather than individuals listening on headphones, would solve this problem because they need someone to tell them if they are pronouncing the words incorrectly, so that they do not continue to make such mistakes.

Discriminatory behavior by employees and students, both Asian and non-Asian, is another major concern expressed by students. Some discriminatory behaviors that students have encountered at RSC were mainly related to communication: 1) "being looked down

on" as not being smart just because Asian Pacific American students have problems pronouncing particular words or phrases, 2) being laughed at during their class presentation because of their accents, and 3) being graded down for not participating in classes. Students claimed that in their former country, they are taught "not to question or challenge the teacher." Though they understand that it is okay to participate, many still have a problem of adapting to the new and different of classroom communication modes.

Also, several students mentioned that they have been discriminated against by some RSC's administrators. For example, students who had problems with particular instructors and/or staff made appointments to see the division deans. They did not feel that the deans gave them an opportunity to express their concern before making a judgement; they claimed that deans had already made up their minds that the students were just there to "nag" or "vent". Almost always, students said that they only "went to the top" when necessary; however, they really felt that was a waste of their time; the faculty or staff continued to treat students in the same manner.

Still others related the problem of being stereotyped, that all Asians are "A" students, and instructors expected them to perform at that level. They felt some instructors did not understand the individual needs of each student. For example, students who have recently arrived in the U.S. have different educational needs than those who were born and raised here. New arrivals have a different outlook on life, as well as different goals and dreams.

Evening students expressed frustration that they can not get support services during the evening. They claimed that most offices are closed by the time they arrive on campus. Some wanted to know why there are so many students here at night, yet RSC appears to be only concentrating on those who are here during the daytime. Also, evening students tend

to be older, more mature and have careers, so they felt they needed different kinds of services that closely met their needs.

Finally, students were also concerned with some of the problems that plague all students at RSC: problems related to the bookstore, cafeteria and parking. The problems identified with the bookstore dealt with the cost of textbooks and the staff, who seem unfriendly and unwelcoming. The quality and cost of food were negatively evaluated. Students also complained about the lack of parking and that many staff lots often appear to have open spaces.

What office, department and/or program have Asian Pacific American students found helpful?

"The admissions department has been very helpful in answering my questions and making things go smoothly."

"The counseling department has been very helpful in planning my study program goals."

"The financial aid office has been very helpful in explaining how to apply for aid."

"The English department helped me to improve my English."

Students most often cited three departments that they considered to be most helpful: the Admissions and Records Office, the Financial Aid office, and the counseling department. This is not to say that these are the only departments which have been helpful to students, but rather that they probably have the most interaction with students.

One of the biggest obstacles for these students is financial in nature, and the financial aid office provided much of the needed economic support. Students were grateful for financial assistance while pursuing their educational goal. Many said that they would not even be here if it was not for the government funding their tuition. According to the students, being able to study without the additional burden of having to pay for their education, along with family obligations and "making it" in a new country, is an enormous relief. They also remarked that the Financial Aid office seems under-staffed, and this could be a source of complaints. However, participants felt that staff should make an effort to "see each student as the only student of the day" and help them to achieve their educational goals.

Students stated that counselors and office staff have many good qualities. The counselors were very receptive to helping students when they first entered the college, to the

time they were ready to transfer or graduate. The students believed the counselors played a very viable role in shaping their careers. They matched the personalities and interests of students to the appropriate major that they could turn into a life-long career. Students asked that counselors stay informed of the new admissions requirement of universities.

Students were very pleased with the registration process at RSC. They felt that RSC has made a great effort in this area, especially with short line registration and telephone registration. Students claimed they can get their classes in timely manner without having to run around looking for what classes were available and waiting in long lines, much like what is happening at other colleges. Also, they complimented the people in Admissions who were willing to answer their questions when they first arrived at RSC's door.

While students listed these three different aspects of RSC as the most helpful, they mentioned one theme that applied to all three services: direction. The students believed that in all three areas, the individuals who worked in these offices helped provide them direction in achieving something that they felt is vital to a successful college experience. This ranges from communication by Admissions and Records about how a student enrolls at RSC, career advice by the counseling department in terms of guiding a student through curriculum at RSC, what to expect once they leave RSC, to financial help for tuition and books through financial aid.

What office, department and/or program have Asian Pacific American students found <u>not</u> to be helpful?

"A counselor did not provide me with the correct answers about my major and as a result, I took courses that were not transferrable."

"The financial aid office gave me the wrong information; therefore, I was misled."

"Campus security does not help if you have a problem."

"The bookstore sales ladies discriminate against minorities."

Again, students were not very open to answering questions that may have shed negative light on RSC. The findings regarding these last two questions clearly illustrate that the Financial Aid office and the Counseling department are the most heavily utilized services for these students. It is also clear that these services have been met with mixed reactions. Students found similar aspects of these services both helpful and not helpful. The students said the problems associated with a particular service were not with the service itself, but with some of the individuals who work in these programs and who express a lack of knowledge regarding a particular subject matter.

Students' main problem with the <u>Financial Aid office</u> was the staff's behavior. They claimed some staff did not take the time to thoroughly explain the processes that students must go through in order to qualify or receive aid. Students also hoped that RSC would consider hiring staff who will be able to speak to students in their native tongues, especially for new immigrants. Other times, students claimed that the staff misinformed them of deadlines and application procedures, or lost the student's file.

For many of the students, they felt that no one has to know all the answers, but that they must feel that the individuals assisting them must have a genuine concern in helping them. The students believed that if a staff member does not know an answer, then they should have said so and tried to make an effort to know the answer for the next student.

Some students also commented that the Counseling department was not helpful in some instances because the answers given by counselors resulted in students taking more classes than required. Another frustration for students was not being able to make an appointment to see a counselor in a timely manner. If a student was able to make an appointment, many felt that the counselor was rushing through their appointment in order to get to the next student. These problems have left many students upset.

Other departments in which problems occurred mentioned by the students included 1) Campus Security due to their lack of patience in assisting students; 2) the Bookstore because students felt discriminated against by staff; 3) the International Student Office for failing to live up to their responsibility in assisting students, especially when this office actively recruits students, and 4) the computer labs for their lack of qualified tutors.

Recommendations:

"Offer more courses in Asian cultures, arts, histories, and languages."

"We need to have an Asian Ethnic Studies program to bring about pride, so that students can feel good about who they are."

"A better English program which will help us to improve our speaking skills, one that caters to non-native adults."

"I want RSC to give Asian students the opportunity to communicate with American people through cultural exchanges, such as 'conversation tables' or events that celebrate a particular aspect of my heritage."

"Hire a more representative staff, those who share a similar cultural understanding as the students do."

"I would like to see a study hall, other than the library, where students can come together to study. I would also like to see an Asian cultural center that is geared more to education and the social needs of Asian students."

RSC prides itself on taking a proactive role in responding to individual educational needs of our diverse student population. Based on the concerns, compliments and suggestions of our Asian Pacific American student body, few recommendations are presented in order to better address the major issues mentioned by the students who participated in the small group interviews.

RSC should hire a more representative staff and faculty to closely match the ethnic make-up of the entire student body, more specifically, Asian staff. Students have noticed that there is a lack of Asian-speaking personnel to provide information necessary to enter RSC and remain successful during their stay at RSC. Staff who speak a students' native tongue would eliminate misunderstanding, giving students a comfort level that would prompt them to ask questions. If more faculty and staff share students' cultures, traditions,

and languages, they can understand each other better. This step would certainly be positive move in the direction of addressing the discrimination complaints of students.

The new student orientation process is filled with important information that all students need to know in order to be successful at RSC. The orientation needs to be presented in other languages so that students who do not understand English well will have the same opportunity to learn about the various programs that RSC provides. The college should also have bilingual counselors and staff present at the orientation to assist students with class scheduling, as well to answer their questions. RSC should provide different informational types of meetings such as transfer, financial aid applications and loan processes, and special skills classes in students' native languages.

More programs and events to promote cultural understanding among staff, faculty, as well as students are needed. One suggestion for a program was a forum or presentation to explain the differences and similarities of the various Asian cultures. Celebrations like the TET festival and the Hmong's New Year for other cultures are important. Cultural exchange clubs in which staff and students can learn to appreciate each other, without encountering differences, are a useful tool in providing cultural understanding.

Also, different Asian language classes should also be offered as a regular part of the college's curriculum. These programs and events should not just be a one time event, but consistent and permanently scheduled in the college's calendar. RSC should take advantage of its high rate of diversity among its student body and the communities surrounding the campuses. We can be the model that the rest of the state, even the country, can look up to when it comes to "first class services" to a diverse student body.

Faculty and staff should give students a fair opportunity to learn without stereotyping them into a particular classification, without knowing their individual traits. Students simply want to have an opportunity to achieve whatever their goal is in a non-threatening environment. All students are different, and their levels of achievement differ, however, any one student should not be precluded from that opportunity to achieve simply because they belong to a particular ethnic group.

Asian Pacific American students expressed concerns that the existing ESL program does not always meet their needs. They felt that it addresses only the needs of native speakers. Students feel that the ESL program should include beginning reading courses and speech (pronunciation) courses to provide students with skills necessary for employment. In other words, re-evaluate the ESL program to fit the needs of the new students, the non-native adult learners.

Based on its large diverse student body, RSC needs to have an Asian resource center where students can go to gain information and services in their native language regarding admissions, financial aid, classes, transfer, etc. The purpose of this center would be to give students an avenue to gain information about the college in a non-threatening environment. This center should also include a library with Asian materials that would contribute to the sense of belonging for Asian students. Students would like an area within this center for tutoring in subject matters in which they are having problems, especially English and pronunciation skills. This center would also be a place where they can share with each other concerns about particular social issues that are of importance to Asian students. Also, the center could serve as a resource for non-Asians who want to learn more about cultures.

traditions, and experiences of Asian people and be able to gain this knowledge from their own peers.

Finally, based on numerous requests from students, it is imperative that RSC expand curriculum offered related to Asian Ethnic Studies and consider developing this curriculum into a program. Young Asian Pacific American students need to have ways to learn about their cultures and traditions from an academic viewpoint. **The students said they sometimes felt like they were caught in between two worlds, one in which they lived the traditional life through the eyes of their parents and family and the other in which people expected them to be the model Asian Pacific American, neither of which they understood or felt a sense of belonging**. An Asian Ethnic Studies program would give students an opportunity to feel proud about who they are and that their cultures and history are "good" enough to be taught and studied in an academic institution. Also, the classes in the program should be transferrable to universities.

In conclusion, this is the first series of small group dialogues that the Research Department has done with our Asian Pacific American students. Though we learned much about the needs of our Asian Pacific American students, we also hope that the students realize RSC is serious in enhancing its effort to make their educational experience at RSC one which results in more than just a degree or certificate. RSC hopes to instill in our students a sense that we really do care about who they are as individuals. The Research Department hopes to continue these dialogues with other groups of RSC students to learn about their individual needs in order to maintain RSC's goal of providing highest level services to all its students.

Why did Asian Pacific American students decide to come to RSC?

Classes
- RSC had many classes for my major. (10)
- It was very easy to register for classes. (2)
- RSC was the only school that offered classes in my major during the day.

Diversity
- RSC was close to my home and had a large population of Asian students.
- I decided to come to RSC because many of the students were of my culture.
- This college had many people who spoke my language and could help me understand things more clearly and it was near my home.

Friends and family
- RSC was recommended to me by my friend; he gave me good advice. (6)
- My brother said that I can take courses here to earn a degree for better living. (3)
- My cousins go to school here.

Location
- The location was close to my home. (16)
- I came to RSC because its close to my work and home. It also offers classes that I like. (4)
- RSC was on the way from home to work. (2)
- I took the bus and RSC was very accessible.
- RSC was close to my work and easily accessible.
- At first, it's convenient for my brother to take me to school on his way to work. But now, I stay because I like the school.
- RSC was close to my home and had an excellent tutoring center and computer center.
- RSC was near the bus station and many of my friends were going to school there.

Reputation
- I was told that RSC was a good school. (4)
- RSC is a good community college in Orange County. (4)
- RSC had a good reputation for their quality of instructors and classes. (3)
- My friends told me that RSC had excellent science courses and it was near my home.

Tuition
- The cost of tuition is less expensive than the universities. (5)
- I can only afford the fees here at RSC to learn English and other skills. (4)
- To get prepared before attending the university and the tuition is lower than the university.

Other
- I wanted to learn how to speak English better. (2)
- Fate made the decision for me, I did not make this decision.
- I wanted to gain more knowledge and a career.
- I was very impressed with the library and the school was near my house.
- An internship with the JTPA introduced me to the school.
- I was admitted without much hassle. RSC gave me the opportunity to go to school.

What Asian Pacific American students liked most about RSC?

Atmosphere

- I like everything at RSC. (3)
- I feel comfortable at the college and it's very clean. (3)
- The excellent tutoring services and the friendly services/programs. (2)
- I like the small campuses at RSC. (2)
- I like RSC for the comfortable atmosphere and the people. (2)
- The educational opportunity that RSC provides.
- RSC is close to my house and it has a nice reputation in Orange County. The organization of the college is good and the faculty are knowledgeable.
- It's a challenging school with a lot of warmth and love.
- The parking lot is very safe, the college and the restrooms are clean, the teachers are good and RSC has a good library that is very quiet.
- RSC accommodates students and their needs.
- RSC has great programs and services including the counseling center, the transfer center, career planning center and the tutoring center.
- Great facilities, including the buildings being close together.
- The language and computer labs are very good.
- Different location at both Santa Ana and Orange.
- Safety features, including parking.
- I like the students, they are very friendly.
- I like the in-class environment that faculty provides.
- The buildings are close together, so it is easy to go from class to class.
- I enjoy the relaxed atmosphere and good teachers like **Ms. Ruth Babeshoff**.
- RSC is very accessible, progressive in its thinking and has helpful staff and a mixed student body.
- I like the location of both the Santa Ana and Orange campuses.
- RSC does a good job of accommodating students and the instructors are very understanding.
- The accessible parking lots.

Classes

- I like the variety of classes that RSC offers, unlike other colleges.(6)
- RSC has good vocational courses. (4)
- Good selection of classes, especially in technology and pharmacy technology. (3)
- RSC provides many good English and ESL classes. (3)
- RSC has many good office technology classes. (2)
- The college offers a lot of courses for my major, computer science. (2)
- I like the English and vocational (mechanical and electrical) classes, as well as the equality showed between the different races.
- I like the speech classes because I want to improve my English.

Diversity

- Asian staff are very understanding.
- There is a mixed community with diverse ethnic groups.
- I like the fact that there is no discrimination at RSC and that the college has a policy on it.
- I like the International Festival and all the other activities and programs that promote cultural understanding. Don't stop, continue to do so.
- RSC is a good school with many Vietnamese students. It's close to my house and provides a lot of services to assist students.

- I like RSC because of its cultural diversity. I feel more comfortable because RSC has older students who are my age. I also like meeting people with different ethnic backgrounds who attend RSC.
- I like the fact that most students have a different cultural background and that RSC is providing all students with equal opportunity.
- I like making friends with the foreign students in school and studying the American language.
- I like RSC because it has more Vietnamese students than any other college. This makes it easier to get information about services at the college.

Faculty and staff
- Enthusiastic, friendly, understanding instructors and staff. (8)
- I like the teachers the most. (4)
- Courtesy of people: teachers, staff, and students.
- The teachers are very helpful. I met some good people through my participation in student activities. I have grown as a result of these interactions.
- Experienced teachers and good organization of the college.
- Organization, method of teaching, and having enthusiastic teachers.
- The staff is very helpful and courses in the Pharmacy Technology program are always available.
- The people are very nice and I feel comfortable and confident at RSC.
- The teachers are very helpful.
- I like the instructors at RSC, especially **Mr. Airey** and **Mr. Harris**.
- I love the people at RSC, especially the teachers because they are very nice.
- I like two English teachers: **Mrs. Dixon** and **Ms.-------**.
- Faculty are very knowledgeable and committed to student learning.

Library
- The large space to study in the library. (3)
- The library is great. (2)
- I like the selection of materials in the library. (2)
- The resource librarians are really good.
- The magazines in the library provide easy reading as well as very good research materials. (3)

Location
- The location of the college.
- It is close to my home and near where I work. (2)
- RSC is close to home, inexpensive, doesn't require a test to enter, and has many classes for my major and my own personal interest.
- RSC is close to my home with a safe parking lot, and many enthusiastic instructors.
- I like RSC because it is near my house, has great ESL instructors and I have made many friends with other students.

Technology
- RSC has better computers than any other college. (3)
- The use of computers, it's wonderful to be able to use technology to do homework.
- I like the way the computer classes are taught and the teachers are knowledgeable.

Tuition
- The education is less expensive than the universities, the class size is much smaller, and the people are very friendly. (2)
- RSC is inexpensive and located in a convenient area with up-to-date computer classes.
- Tuition is not costly and the fee was lowered for students who already have a bachelor's degree.

What Asian Pacific American students disliked most about RSC?

Classes

- RSC does not have enough Architecture classes for my major.
- Some classes fill up too quickly and I can't take that particular class.
- There are no Chinese language courses.
- Maintain the same standards for different sections of a class.
- Not enough room for classes.

Discrimination

- Too many programs tailored to Latinos, I feel left out. (12)
- People judge our intelligence based on our accent - that we're stupid if we can't pronounce things correctly. (10)
- Faculty & staff stereotype us, they think all Vietnamese are cheaters. (6)
- People laugh when Asian students make presentations in Speech classes because of their accent. (4)
- I dislike the way people stereotype Asian students. (4)
- I do not like RSC when the administrators show their discrimination among students. (3)
- Discrimination and stereotypes against Asians (3)
- There are too many Asian students at RSC. Some do not cooperate with other students and they are only nice if they need help. (2)
- _____ (Psychology) discriminates against Vietnamese. I don't like going into this class.
- I feel very uncomfortable at RSC because I am an Asian student from a small country and people only focus on large Asian countries like Vietnam, China and Japan.
- The administration is not very friendly. Teachers also discriminate against students at RSC.
- Difficulties associated with interracial dating.
- Some students don't treat Asians as equally as they treat other students of their own race.
- Some people discriminate and stereotype Asian students.
- The attitude of some students, faculty and staff towards the handicapped. These people discriminate against me because I am handicapped and Asian.
- Some American, Mexican and foreigners still discriminate against Asians.
- I dislike the way registration favors old students over new students. This is not fair.

ESL Program

- There are not enough classes in the ESL program. For example, we need more classes that teach spelling and proper English structure.
- The ESL program needs to change so that certain classes can emphasize foreign students only, and affirmative action does not work at RSC.
- Teachers assuming that all Vietnamese' English skills are the same as Americans.
- I don't like English instructors because they are not patient with us while we are learning English. (4)
- I don't like the ESL program at RSC. I need more help to improve my English.
- More time in ESL classes should be spent on accent reduction. (5)
- ESL program needs to be revised to emphasize more on conversational versus plain reading. (3)
- We spend too much time on vocabulary, looking up words in dictionary and memorizing the spelling, that we don't have time to use the words in conversation. I think this is a better way to learn. (4)

Evening Students

- There are more older, mature students attending RSC at night, yet there are no services that match our needs, like child care. (4)
- Many of the buildings and services are closed on Friday evening.
- Lab hours for evening students.
- The library and math centers are not open on Friday evenings.
- Few theater arts classes are offered at night.
- Not enough services are open at night for students. Why are you only servicing day students?

Facilities

- Language and nursing labs are too small for us to learn effectively. (4)
- The restrooms are too dirty. (2)
- I dislike the lab room because it is too small.
- RSC doesn't have any games for Asian students in the game room, like ping-pong and billiards.
- When it rains, water leaks from the roof in Johnson Center into the cafeteria.
- Lab (Room D-308) is too noisy. I have a difficult time hearing the audio tapes during lab.
- No air conditioning in the circuit training room at SAC.
- There are not enough computers in the labs, especially at the end of the semester.
- The library is too loud, librarians should control the noise level.
- The music department and the weight center are too small and too old. The cafeteria is too expensive and we need a better student lounge.

Faculty and Staff

- The ethnic make-up of the faculty and staff does not reflect that of the student body. Why are there so few Asian staff? (8)
- Some instructors do not offer ample help sessions outside of class. They are not in their offices. (6)
- Staff are disrespectful to students. We are the people who pay their salary. (5)
- The people in the bookstore, student business office, and registration are not very nice to us. (5)
- The people in the Financial Aid Office are not very helpful. (4)
- Teachers don't enforce pre-requisite guidelines that are established by the school. (3)
- Some of the faculty are too easy, so there are many students who are passing without having to study.
- I dislike the counseling center because the counselors have a general lack of regard for the students and don't provide much guidance in the area of career planning.
- I don't like the way Mr. _____ teaches English.
- I do not see any Cambodian faculty or staff at RSC. We have no role models that can help guide us and relate to us because of our shared experiences.
- Instructors are not given enough funding to do their job properly.
- Full-time instructors are not as responsive as part-time instructors.
- Discrepancies between placement tests and teachers standards.
- The politics of competing interest groups at RSC. Also, some teachers could improve their teaching skills. Programs and services staff should have better behavior, perhaps a smile. RSC needs a better way of advertising the activities and events on the college.
- Medical Assistant instructor Mrs. _____. She may have great knowledge, but she doesn't know how to make herself understood. The subject is simple, but she makes it complicated and students confused. She does not know how to better prepare students before the lectures. I passed the class, but I am saying this so that future students do not have to go through what we did.
- Cosmetology classes, Ms._____ from (Hair California Academy) does not pay attention to students from RSC as much as students from her own program.

Parking and Safety

- I can never get a parking space. (4)
- There are not enough parking spaces for students in the parking lot. (3)
- Sometimes it is difficult to find a parking space.

Other

- Bookstore prices are too high and the refund policy is horrible. (8)
- The quality of the food in the cafeteria needs improvement and the food is also too expensive. (5)
- RSC needs a higher standard of education. (2)
- RSC doesn't have any special programs for students who are senior citizens.
- I am frustrated with the choir.
- The books and the food in the cafeteria are also too expensive.
- The teaching standards have declined a great deal over the last few years.
- EOPS program does not assist those students who for one reason or another can only take classes on part-time basis. They should help all needy students.
- The advertising boards at the center of the college need to be carefully checked so that only information having to do with education should be up.
- The financial aid process needs to be completed a little quicker.
- RSC needs to pull away from the "high school" atmosphere.
- The bookstore monopolizes the prices on books.

What office, department and/or program have Asian Pacific American students found helpful?

Admissions & Records Office

- The registration process is very easy here, especially with telephone registration. (6)
- The Admissions department has been very helpful in answering my questions and making things go smoothly. (5)
- The Admissions and Records department was most helpful when I first came to RSC. (4)
- I find Registration very helpful. (2)

Counseling Department

- The counseling department has been very helpful in planning my study program goals. (5)
- The counseling staff is very nice. (3)
- The counseling office was very helpful with my scheduling my classes and applying for transfer to the university. (2)

English and ESL Department

- The English and ESL department. (2)
- The English department helped me to improve my English. (2)

Financial Aid Office

- The financial aid office was very helpful in explaining how to apply for aid. (9)
- Some people in financial aid are very helpful, especially those who are willing to speak Vietnamese to those who need it. (3)
- The financial aid office was very helpful, especially **Mrs. Janet Hermosillo**.

Other

- The reading department has been very helpful in my studies. (5)
- The EOPS program has helped me the most. (3)
- The math center has been very helpful, especially when I really needed to study. (3)
- **Mrs. Gloria Guzman** of the Nursing department and the computer and tutoring centers were most helpful in understanding concepts and getting better grades.
- Library and all the labs.
- EOPS, New Horizons and the learning center have helped me the most.
- The criminal justice department.
- Student Support Services has helped me a great deal, so I usually go there when I need help.
- The information science and business department have been the most helpful because I take most of my classes in these two departments.
- The pharmacy technology and the Speech Communication departments were helpful.
- Human resources department.
- The tutorial learning center, especially **Dr. Michael Trevitt**. (2)
- The transfer center.
- The human development department and the speech center have been very helpful.
- The disabled student program and learning center.
- The programs that have helped me the most are financial aid, EOPS and the job placement.
- The biology and science departments.
- The speech department has done a great deal to improve my English.
- The New Horizons office and the Office Technology program.

What office, department and/or program have Asian Pacifican students found <u>not</u> to be helpful?

Counseling Department

- It is very hard to make an appointment with the counselors. (11)
- The counseling department because they were very uncertain about my questions. (6)
- One of the counselors provided me no help in finding information about my major at another university. As a result, I took the wrong courses here because they are not transferable for credits at the universities. (2)

Financial Aid Office

- The financial aid office because some of the staff have a poor attitude. (7)
- The financial aid office gave me the wrong information, therefore I was misled. (5)
- RSC should hire more financial aid staff who can speak other language so that they can help those who just arrived in the United States. (3)
- A particular person in the financial aid office did not help me or my friends, especially when we are in need of financial assistance. I hate making an appointment to see him.
- The financial aid office lost my file and could not find it for months, making me lose part of my aid package.

Other

- The bookstore sales ladies discriminate against minorities. (6)
- Campus Security doesn't help if you have a problem. (5)
- The International Student Office because they don't take responsibility for what they are supposed to do. (3)
- The computer center, because they do not have qualified tutors. (3)
- Many of the tutors in the tutoring center are not qualified. (2)
- The EOPS department doesn't have answers to questions and they do a poor job of explaining instructions. (2)
- The faculty and aides in the psychology department were not very helpful. (2)
- The New Horizons program because it did not help me improve my listening skills.
- The people who work in the Student Activities Office are very rude and will not try to obtain information for students.
- All programs are geared too much to Latinos and I cannot receive any support or guidance.
- The Nursing Department needs to provide more space and videos for student use.
- My teacher in Reading N80A & B always gets upset with Vietnamese students.
- I don't like most of the offices at RSC because they don't have Vietnamese staff or they only speak English and are not sensitive to my needs.

Things Asian Pacific American students would like to see at RSC:

Bookstore

- I want to see RSC do more to help students pay for their books. (5)
- RSC needs to change the buy-back policy of the bookstore. (2)
- A bookstore rental program.
- Package deals on books for a class, not selling them separately for higher profit.
- Lower textbook prices.
- Help senior citizens get their textbooks for free.

Classes

- Offer more courses on Asian cultures, arts, languages, and histories. (10)
- A better English program which will help us improve our speaking skills, one that caters to non-native adults. (8)
- Offer more "cutting edge" computer classes on the weekend to keep up with all of the new technology. (6)
- A better selection of classes. (4)
- More organic chemistry classes.
- Chinese language courses.
- More sections of classes in upper division accounting.
- I wish RSC could have some floral design classes and special classes for Vietnamese students to help us improve our English. I would also like to see RSC celebrate more Vietnamese traditions like "TET".
- Chinese and Japanese language classes to keep up with the rise in business activities in the Pacific Rim.
- More theater arts classes in the evening.
- More computer network classes.

Cultural Activities

- We need to have an Asian Ethnic Studies program to bring about pride, so that students can feel good about who they are. (11)
- I think we need to get more information about minority students so that others can learn about these cultures and develop better understanding. (8)
- RSC should give Asian students the opportunity to communicate with Americans through cultural exchanges, such as "conversational tables," or events to celebrate aspects of one's heritage. (7)
- Have different programs for older Asian students vs. younger Asian students. (3)
- More Vietnamese language classes. (3)
- More education on racial issues so that we can end racial discrimination at RSC. (2)
- More supporting programs for Vietnamese. (2)
- I would like to have guest speakers who experienced the Vietnam war in our history classes because sometimes things get distorted.
- Need to focus more on Asian culture in cooking classes.
- A Japanese celebration called "Girl's Day" in the Spring with dances, music and stories.
- RSC should have a Japanese club, Asian Bible Study and an Asian literature club. I would also like to see classes in scuba diving.
- More activities for the entire student population.
- I want RSC to help students that just arrived in America with their English and better study habits.
- RSC could help people to understand the different cultural backgrounds of students and make them feel important. I also want to see more space on the admissions form for other ethnic groups.

Facilities

- Larger Math lab. (7)
- Bigger and higher technology computer labs for students to study. (5)
- Reconstruct the old buildings, such as the business building.
- Better equipment in the Reading Center.
- Put windows in all classrooms.
- We need to improve classroom equipment, i.e. overhead projectors.
- I want to see more computers for public use and more activities, like orientation where
- Bigger lab facilities.
- Cafeteria at Orange Campus.
- More computers for students in the computer lab.
- Larger cafeteria, new buildings, bigger restrooms, a larger parking lot, and a bigger library.

Faculty and Staff

- Hire a more representative staff who share similar cultural understanding as students do. (16)
- More Vietnamese counselors and staff. (9)
- More information from the counseling department and better counseling staff. (7)
- Meaningful evaluation for all instructors where results are considered by their boss and students. (5)
- More instructors. (4)
- More tutors in Lab B-12. (2)
- More Vietnamese faculty, including counselors and ESL teachers. (2)
- A counselor for each particular department with expertise in that field because the counselors do not have knowledge concerning some majors.
- We need to get better information about transferring to a university. For example, I would like to know which universities are strong in the field of engineering.
- I wish RSC could have a wider selection of instructors for classes in microbiology.
- I wish more teachers would help students with limited English skills, and reduce the number of classes required for a degree, especially for those who have achieved a baccalaureate from another country.
- Better counselors-spend more time and take more interest in students.
- Give teachers more support and resources to teach properly.
- More representative tutors and tutoring hours in the Tutorial Learning Center.
- Teachers need to be sensitive to different learning styles, they only relate to those who understand the subject.
- I would like to see more Asian doctors and nurses in the health center. I would also like RSC to have a volunteer foreign language interpreter directory with a list of contacts for people who are more comfortable speaking another language besides English.
- RSC needs to have more Vietnamese instructors to help Vietnamese students who can not speak English well.
- I would like teachers to stop discriminating against Asians by thinking that they all cheat on exams. I would also like RSC to provide a clearer explanation of affirmative action.
- More Vietnamese faculty and staff, especially administrators.
- More tutors in speech classes.
- Bilingual staffing for essential services, such as registration and financial aid.
- College staff and faculty must comply with RSC standards, i.e., ESL 110 students can enter English 101.

Library

- Open the library later for night students. (3)

- I wish RSC could have more books in the library. (2)
- The library should have every textbook used that semester in the reference section for students to look at because some of the textbooks are too expensive to purchase.

Student (Information) Center

- I want to see a study hall other than the library, with couches like a lounge where students can study together. I would also like to see an Asian cultural center that is geared more to education and social needs along with support groups. (6)
- I want to see an Asian center on campus which will provide an opportunity to link RSC to the Pacific Rim and help students learn more about this important part of the world. (3)
- An intercultural club and center. (3)
- Better information outlet for Asians students to learn about programs at RSC. (2)
- A room for all students to meet and study or talk.
- A student lounge with comfortable couches where students could rest and talk to each other.
- Have exposure to one culture each month, like Orange Campus.
- We need information programs that notify the Cambodian and Chinese students about all of the programs and facilities available at RSC. We also need to have Cambodian and Chinese teachers, counselors and support groups.
- I would like to see more open sessions, such as these dialogues, for students to come and exchange ideas along with a suggestion box.
- I want to see a person who speaks Vietnamese in the information booth to help direct people where to go and what to do regarding specific programs.
- Better information of campus services.
- Better information for student orientations.

Security

- More lights in the parking lots and better security at night. (3)
- I would like to see better campus security because one of the officers chased me out of the office when I questioned him about a parking ticket.

Student Jobs

- Job placement should allow students to work and get all federal funding, even during the summer. (2)
- More work-study for students.
- More job opportunities for students on campus.

Other

- More work-study or part-time jobs for RSC students. (6)
- Cheaper and better quality food in the cafeteria. (4)
- More programs for Asian students. (4)
- Find a way to bring students together. (4)
- Inter-cultural center to bring groups together. (2)
- Lower book prices. (2)
- Raise the standard of education. (2)
- Lower food prices in the cafeteria and more entertainment programs. (2)
- I want a "zesty" campus life, especially in the area of recreation.
- More services open at night .
- Provide students with a better explanation of federal funding to RSC.
- Deal with the homeless people around the campus.
- More support services, i.e. Puente program.

- I would like to see an increase in the amount of money for books in the EOPS program. I would also like to see more information about scholarships.
- RSC should have a department that helps students in an emergency, particularly with their finances.
- All students must remain silent in labs in order to study more efficiently.
- I would deduct some of the classes needed to get a degree in the United States if an individual already graduated with a baccalaureate degree in a foreign country.
- Decrease the number of students.
- More tutoring services.
- Change the structure of the Architecture program.
- Change the status of full-time students from 12 units to 10 units because most of us who immigrated from Vietnam are older and slower.
- Shorter waiting list for the nursing program.
- Increase financial aid to students.
- More time in the Learning Center.
- Better information about majors, job possibilities and what programs exist here.
- Comprehensive orientation for new students to gain exposure to the college.
- More classes to teach Vietnamese students how to speak better English.
- Better security for students.